

Senate Resolution 514

By: Senator Cowsert of the 46th

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending Darius O'Brien Weems and recognizing Thursday, March 5, 2009, as
2 Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day at the state capitol; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) affects one in 3,500 boys with an
4 estimated 20,000 sufferers in the United States and 60,000 world wide; and

5 WHEREAS, the life expectancy for those children with DMD is their late teens to early
6 twenties; and

7 WHEREAS, DMD knows no racial or geographic boundaries and is the most common fatal
8 genetic childhood disease; and

9 WHEREAS, Darius O'Brien Weems, a young man living with DMD, was inspired by the
10 loss of his 19 year old brother, Mario, to the same disease, and decided to raise awareness
11 of DMD and its effects on countless lives around the world; and

12 WHEREAS, in 2005, Darius Weems and his 11 man crew created *Darius Goes West: The*
13 *Roll of His Life*, a documentary following Darius from his hometown of Athens, Georgia,
14 across the country to Los Angeles, California, with the goal of making an appearance on the
15 MTV series *Pimp My Ride*, to customize his wheelchair; and

16 WHEREAS, the movie documents the 7,000 mile journey in which Darius and his friends
17 prove that life has no limits and celebrates the amazement and wonder of friendship and
18 being alive; and

19 WHEREAS, Clif Downie at Full EFX Auto Techniques heard of Darius's need for a
20 wheelchair and surprised Darius in Atlanta, upon his return from the West, with a donated
21 and fully customized wheelchair; and

22 WHEREAS, the hilarious and heartfelt film was funded through grants from United Cerebral
23 Palsy, Children's Wish Foundation International, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, and the
24 Turner Foundation and by the generous and kind-hearted citizens of Athens, Georgia, who
25 donated money and helped raise funds for the cross-country trip; and

26 WHEREAS, Darius's film, which has raised over \$1.5 million in theaters alone, is a nonprofit
27 production with \$17 of every \$20 DVD purchase going to Charley's Fund for support of
28 DMD research; and

29 WHEREAS, one of the most decorated movies of 2007, *Darius Goes West* has captured 28
30 film festival awards and dramatically increased awareness of DMD and the desperate need
31 for research and funding to find a cure, as well as increased the awareness of the importance
32 of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and

33 WHEREAS, *Darius Goes West* has created an educational program with a multisubject
34 curriculum to accompany the film, and in 2009, a DVD of *Darius Goes West* was mailed to
35 every middle school and high school in the United States.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
37 commend Darius O'Brien Weems and his crew for their remarkable film, applaud them for
38 their outstanding contributions in furthering the country's awareness of Duchenne Muscular
39 Dystrophy, and recognize Thursday, March 5, 2009, as Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day
40 at the state capitol.

41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
42 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Darius O'Brien Weems.